

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT OR-07-16
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BLM Management Review of Kim Family Incident Completed

PORTLAND – The Bureau of Land Management has announced the completion of its Management Review of the policies and procedures related to management of road #34-8-36 and other routes in the vicinity of the Bear Camp Road. This Management Review found that no Bureau of Land Management employee failed to carry out any specific order or work assignment concerning locking a specific gate by a specific date or time. However, the team recommended improved communication protocols when implementing procedures and policies to reduce the potential for future similar incidents.

Gates are opened or closed based on a variety of management issues and public needs, including: timber sales; woodcutting; Christmas tree permits; hunting; wildlife habitat; and soils and weather.

In this case several factors contributed to the gate being left open, including the fact that the lock discovered at the gate was not the standard Bureau of Land Management Grants Pass Field Office key lock. Also, in order to protect visitors to public lands, the Bureau of Land Management Medford District Office standard work practice is to clear the entire road system behind a gate to ensure all visitors are out of the area. In addition, the Management Review highlighted internal communications issues related to the status of the gate.

“In the course of our Management Review we learned lessons that I am certain will help to refine road and gate management. One immediate action is that the Bureau of Land Management Medford District Manager will direct more law enforcement patrols of roads in this area,” said Oregon/Washington Bureau of Land Management State Director Ed Shepard.

Specifically, these lessons included the need to improve communications between the State Office Maintenance Organization crews, law enforcement officers, and Field Office staff working on the ground to increase awareness of the implementation of the Bureau of Land Management Grants Pass Field Office gate management plan that identifies every gate. It also describes the purpose of the gates and rationale for closure, e.g. administrative access, seasonal and permanent closures. Additionally, the Bureau of Land Management will engage stakeholders (such as the U.S. Forest Service, Josephine County, affected land owners, and the public) to help determine additional future actions related to gate and road management.

The Bureau of Land Management in western Oregon manages a considerable number of gates and roads across a complex checkerboard landscape. In the Medford District alone the



Bureau of Land Management is responsible for management of approximately 5,460 miles of road and 562 gates. Additionally, in western Oregon, the Bureau of Land Management is responsible for the management of approximately 21,000 miles of roads and 1,213 gates. Following the conclusion of the search and rescue effort, the gate was closed and locked on December 6, 2006 by a Josephine County Sheriff's deputy under contract with the Bureau of Land Management.

This Management Review focused on determining whether or not appropriate policies and procedures were applied, the effectiveness of those policies, and whether changes to those policies and procedures are appropriate.

The Bureau of Land Management will be one of the sixteen members involved in the Governor of Oregon's taskforce that is charged with reviewing how to improve coordination of communication and resources between Federal, State and local authorities in search and rescue operations.

Additional information is available on the Oregon/Washington Bureau of Land Management's website at:

<http://www.blm.gov/or/news/announcements.php>

The Bureau of Land Management manages more land – 258 million surface acres – than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1.8 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The Bureau of Land Management's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, and cultural resources on the public lands.

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